

got within 200 yards of the southern face, where they were held up by heavy fire, although reinforced. Meanwhile the 8th Infantry Brigade, supported by the 37th, had assaulted from the East; the two leading battalions of the former, the Manchesters and 59th Rifles, and some of the 37th Infantry Brigade, succeeded in gaining a foothold in the Redoubt. But here they were heavily counter-attacked by large enemy reinforcements, and, being subjected to an extremely rapid and accurate shrapnel fire from concealed guns in the vicinity of Sinn Aftar, they were forced to fall back to the position from which they started.

27. The troops, who had been under arms for some 30 hours, including a long night march, were now much exhausted, and General Aylmer considered that a renewal of the assault during the night 8/9th March could not be made with any prospect of success. Next morning the enemy's position was found to be unchanged, and General Aylmer, finding himself faced with the deficiency of water already referred to, decided upon the immediate withdrawal of his force to Wadi, which was reached the same night.

28. The evacuation of our wounded had preceded our retirement. The first parties of wounded reached Wadi at 4 p.m. on March 9th, and the last wounded man was attended to in Hospital at that place at 2 a.m., March 10th. The Corps Commander speaks in high terms of the gallantry and devotion displayed by officers and subordinates of the Medical Service and Army Bearer Corps during the fighting. They collected and attended to the wounded under heavy fire in a manner which called forth the admiration of the whole force.

3rd Phase.—11th March to 30th April.

29. No further operations of any importance occurred during March, though minor engagements took place on the right bank, in which enemy trenches were taken and prisoners captured. But rain fell, and the Tigris came down in heavy flood on March 15th, causing extensive inundations, which compelled our troops to evacuate their advanced positions on that bank. For the remainder of the month there was a strenuous struggle with the inundations to prevent the whole country being flooded. Every available man was engaged in digging embankments, and operations were temporarily suspended.

30. On March 12th Major-General Sir G. F. Goringe succeeded to the command of the Corps. Fresh troops now began to arrive upriver, and it was decided to renew active operations as soon as this reinforcement was complete. Careful investigations were made meanwhile as to the feasibility of an advance on Kut by the right bank from Shaikh Suad, but as inquiry showed that the country along this route was not flood-proof, and would be liable to inundation by the breaking of the bunds on the right bank of the Tigris, which were under Turkish control, it was decided that conditions were more favourable for an attack on the Hannah position and an advance up the left bank.

Preparations were accordingly made for putting this plan into action.

31. The 7th Division had been engaged in sapping up to the enemy's front trenches, continually under heavy fire and hampered by floods. By March 28th their sap-heads were 150 yards from the Turkish front line.

On April 1st the 13th Division moved up from Sheikh Saad to relieve them in the front trenches preparatory to the assault. Heavy rain fell, however, on this and the following day, and floods rendered some of the positions of our troops on the right bank untenable. The ground became impassable and operations had to be postponed.

32. By the evening of April 4th the ground had dried sufficiently for the assault. At daylight the next morning the 13th Division jumped out of their trenches and rushed the Turkish first and second lines in quick succession. Our Artillery and machine-guns at once opened on the third and other lines in rear, and by 7 a.m. the whole position was in our hands.

33. The attack on Hannah had been prepared with the greatest care, and was brilliantly executed by General Maude and the 13th Division. The enemy's position was a maze of deep trenches occupying a frontage of only 1,300 yards between the Tigris and the Suwaikieh Marsh, and extending for 2,600 yards from front to rear. Although it was lightly held by the Turks with a few companies and some machine-guns it was a position of great strength.

34. Meanwhile, on the right bank, the 3rd Division had been gaining ground. In the morning the 8th Infantry Brigade, led by the Manchesters, captured the Turkish position on Abu Roman mounds. An attempt by the enemy to recapture this position in the afternoon was beaten off.

During the day the river rose considerably, and it was evident that a fresh flood was coming down. This pointed to the urgency of capturing the Falahiyah and Sannaiyat positions, three and six miles respectively West of the Hannah position, before the rising river should enable the Turks to flood the country between us by opening the bunds.

35. After nightfall a heavy bombardment was directed on the Falahiyah position from 7.15 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., after which the 13th Division assaulted and captured a series of deep trenches in several lines. The position was stubbornly held by about three Battalions of Turks, but by 9.30 p.m. it was completely in our hands and consolidated.

The 38th Infantry Brigade and the Warwicks and Worcesters of the 39th Infantry Brigade did particularly well in this assault. High praise is due to Major-General Maude, his Brigade commanders, and all under their command for this successful night attack. The Division suffered some 1,300 casualties during the day.

36. The 7th Division, which had hitherto been in support, now moved forward, and, passing through the 13th Division, took up a position about two miles east of Sannaiyat, ready to attack the northern portion of these entrenchments at dawn on April 6th. The line of direction was to be maintained by moving with the left flank along a communication trench which joined the Falahiyah and Sannaiyat positions. Previous reconnaissance of the terrain to be traversed had, of course, been impossible during daylight, as it was then still occupied by the Turks.

37. The passage, however, of numerous and deep cross-trenches so hampered the advance that, at dawn, when the assault was to have taken place, the troops were still some 2,300 yards from the enemy's position. This delay was fatal to their chance of success, as the